

Results of Inspections – Adult Jails

The BOC is responsible for inspecting all adult jails (except court and temporary holding facilities built before 1978). In general, results from the past several inspection cycles have shown that jail operations have become increasingly professional and sophisticated, with better managed facilities, better trained staff, more responsive procedures, and improved physical designs. This has increased the rate of compliance, and led to safer, more effective operations. The vast majority of local administrators have demonstrated their intention to operate professional, state-of-the-art jails, despite struggling with severe crowding and fiscal limitations.

The inspection process is dynamic, and the critical issues facing jail administrators change over time. As such, different aspects of jail standards require more focus during various inspection cycles. Results of the 1996/97 inspection cycle are found in Appendix C, which lists adult detention facilities found in full compliance with state standards, and Appendix D, which reports non-compliance by facility name and standard. In reviewing the list of standards most often found in non-compliance, it is important to note that facilities frequently are in non-compliance with only part of the standard, not the entire regulation.

Most Common Areas of Deficiencies

While the majority of local adult detention facilities operate in general compliance with minimum state standards, staffing and crowding have been problems in jail operations for over a decade and continued in the most recent inspection cycle, which found nearly 14 percent of facilities out of compliance with minimum staffing levels that help ensure safe and secure confinement. The most frequently noted deficiencies during this inspection cycle were in the following areas:

- Minimum Diet (lacks required nutritional components);
- Death of a Minor While Detained (inadequate policies and procedures);
- Number of Personnel (inadequate staffing levels);
- Policy and Procedures Manual (missing sections or not updated annually);
- Facility Sanitation, Safety, and Maintenance;
- Court Holding and Temporary Holding Facility Training (failure to meet training standards); and
- Failure to have current fire inspection reports on file.

Type I Facilities, Temporary Holding, and Court Holding Facilities

Type I (city jails and sheriff's substations), temporary holding and court holding facilities generally confine inmates for brief periods of time (96 hours or less). Almost 40 percent of the Type I facilities were out of compliance with minimum diet standards, and 36 percent of temporary holding facilities were out of compliance with training requirements. In addition, nearly one-third of court holding facilities (31 percent) had incomplete or outdated

policies and procedures, which open the door to legal attacks and can hinder the safe, efficient operations of the facility.

Almost a quarter (23 percent) of Type I and temporary holding facilities, and 14 percent of court holding facilities, were out of compliance with the standard requiring specific policies and procedures to address the death of a minor in custody.

Over the past two years, an increasing number of Type I and temporary holding facilities have come into compliance with the use of detoxification cells. However, several facilities remain out of compliance because they could not provide a detoxification cell environment for both male and female inebriates. Many jails were constructed with only one detoxification cell during an era when relatively few women were incarcerated. More women are now being arrested, and many facilities are inadequate to safely house male and female inebriates simultaneously. The screening, classification and medical review of inebriates were also areas of non-compliance.

Type II & Type III Facilities

Type II and Type III facilities, typically operated by counties, tend to be larger than city facilities and house inmates for longer duration, often several months for sentenced inmates and second or third strike inmates awaiting disposition of their charges.

Crowding levels contributed to nearly 22 percent of these facilities being out of compliance with standards related to staffing and visual supervision of inmates, about the same percentage found in non-compliance during the previous inspection cycle.

The next most common deficiency relates to sanitation and maintenance issues. One-fifth of all Type II facilities (21 percent) were out of compliance with standards designed to maintain jails in a safe, healthful manner. There appears to be a relationship between adequate staffing, jail management, crowding and facility cleanliness. In the past, inmate workers were often used to clean the facilities. With the housing of more serious and higher security risk inmates, the population that can be safely allowed to work in facilities has been reduced.

Almost 15 percent of the Type II facilities did not have a current fire inspection report on file at the time of the BOC inspection. Failure to maintain currency with fire and life safety regulations places jurisdictions in a high liability position. In the past, a frequent deficiency was the lack of written policies and procedures. Fortunately, this situation has improved, with only 9 percent of the Type II facilities found in non-compliance with this standard.